

VZCZCXR05269

PP RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK RUEHMOS
DE RUEHBC #0067 1251200

ZNY SSSSS ZZH

P 051200Z MAY 06

FM REO BASRAH

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0328

INFO RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC

RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC

RUCNRAO/IRAQ COLLECTIVE

RUEHBC/REO BASRAH 0347

S E C R E T BASRAH 000067

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 5/5/2016

TAGS: ASEC PTER I2

SUBJECT: BASRAH EMERGENCY ACTION COMMITTEE MEETING 05/01/06

REF: (A) BASRAH 02; (B) 05 BASRAH 159

CLASSIFIED BY: David M. Satterfield, Deputy Chief of Mission,
Embassy Baghdad, Department of State.

REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (SBU) The Regional Coordinator for Regional Embassy Office Basrah (REO) chaired a meeting of the Emergency Action Committee (EAC) on May 1 to discuss the security situation in Basrah. The Deputy Regional Coordinator, RSO, ORA, CPATT, Triple Canopy, POL/ECON Section, USAID, SCID and KBR management attended. The two main points of discussion were intimidation of the REO's local staff and the April 30 mortar attack on the compound.

¶2. (SBU) The Regional Coordinator outlined recent threats and intimidation against local staff and asked that the discussion focus on this issue and on the REO's overall security. The RSO briefed the EAC on recent FSN intimidation in Basrah. On April 30, copies of a pamphlet were left by the main gate that threatened all the Coalition Forces' employees. The local employees from KBR have been particularly affected. On May 1, only 26 of the 180 KBR local employees came to work; 41 KBR employees resigned on April 30. Few local employees at the other agencies within the REO plan to come to work this week. Triple Canopy has only one of its six interpreters still working - one is on leave and is expected to return, but four refused to leave the compound on missions and took leave. (Comment: This latest warning came after the REO went through a period a month ago when local employees' fears for their safety led some to contemplate resigning. The murders of a British military interpreter and a former KBR local employee triggered the previous incident. As a result of those murders many employees took a few days of vacation before returning to work. End Comment.)

¶3. (S) REO Basrah has had several instances of intimidation in the past (Refs A and B). As a result of this latest intimidation the RSO briefed the EAC on an operation conducted at the main entrance gate on the afternoon of April 30: The RSO coordinated with local police to cordon off the area and interview and photograph all the individuals within several hundred meters of the REO's entrance gate. After the cordon was established and the area cleared of personnel, the REO's employees were released. The RSO also briefed the EAC that the UK 17th Battery would conduct a larger show of force on May 2 to sweep units along the main avenue of approach to the REO in the early morning hours.

¶4. (S) The EAC discussed how to limit the effects of FSN intimidation. The Regional Coordinator explained that the REO would look at hiring third country nationals and borrowing employees from other locations within Iraq. The KBR Camp Manager informed the EAC that three critical areas in the camp that must be staffed are the power generation, HVAC and water

purification sections. If KBR does not have enough local employees to work in these sections, the option of hiring third country nationals should be considered as a long-term solution.

Additionally the camp requires its septic tank system to be emptied every 24 hours. The total number of critical employees was determined to be 50 KBR personnel. The KBR manager said that it is not necessary to request additional personnel from Baghdad at this time, and the Regional Coordinator asked him to keep the REO informed if this changes.

¶ 15. (S) The EAC believes that the pressure on local staff will continue unless there is a show of force by Coalition or Iraqi military units. One possible measure that the EAC suggested is the establishment of Iraqi Army (IA) checkpoints in the vicinity of the REO compound. The IA is believed to be less compromised than the Iraqi police and would be a deterrent to hostile surveillance. Another suggestion was the hiring of an Iraqi Kurdish security force such as the "Sandi" company that does counter surveillance and guard operations in Baghdad for DOD elements.

¶ 16. (C) The EAC also discussed the latest indirect fire attack. The REO was hit in the evening of April 30 with three 60 mm mortar rounds that damaged a KBR maintenance trailer and several vehicles. The same general area was targeted on April 4, the most effective indirect fire to date. The EAC decided that mission personnel would not work after evening hours in their office trailers until the current T-wall project is able to provide better protection from side impacts. The EAC also decided that MWR facilities would close at 2100 until it determines the reaction from the British military operation scheduled for May 2.

¶ 17. (U) The EAC will monitor events and reconvene as necessary.

GROSS